

is where the Brady law will help. Among criminals who used a firearm and had a prior record, 23 percent, nearly one-fourth, said they bought their guns retail. Among murderers, about 5,000 had prior records and were still able to buy a gun in a retail store. Among those who killed police officers, 53 percent had a prior conviction record and still were able to do that.

If the Brady law had been in effect, none of these guns could have been purchased at a retail store. So it's a good start. But we need more, much more. We need a new crime bill that is both tough and smart. Our crime bill punishes serious criminals. It sends this message: Kill a police officer and you face the death penalty. It tells violent felons: Three violent crimes, three strikes, and you're out.

Our crime bill also works to prevent crime. It will give us a stronger police presence, 100,000 more police officers in our communities in the next 5 years. It will help stop young criminals from being better armed than the police by banning assault weapons. And while we take these steps, we encourage all our people to work with officers in their communities to reclaim our streets.

Here at the first district, a high premium is put on community policing. We know this works to reduce crime when officers know their neighbors, know the kids on the streets, when they do things like are being done here, where the officers organize citizen patrols and look after the children. Two officers here, Limatine Johnson and Joyce Leonard, run a safe house for kids where they can play games, watch movies, and learn away from the mean streets. I hear that the kids called Officer Johnson "Officer Lima Bean." And they smile when they do.

Police officers, it has been said, are the soldiers who act alone. But we can't let them be alone. The community must honor their service, respect their example, obey the laws they uphold, and walk beside them. If we do that, we can replace fear with confidence and help to make our country whole again.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the First District Police Headquarters.

## **Statement on the Church Bombing in Lebanon**

*February 27, 1994*

The killing of people at prayer is an outrage against faith and humanity. On behalf of the American people, I condemn in the strongest possible terms this latest incident in which innocent Lebanese at communion on Sunday morning were killed by bombs planted in a church. I extend my deepest sympathy to the bereaved.

Just as Friday's massacre in a Hebron mosque was aimed at the peace process, this bomb attack seems clearly aimed at Lebanon's reconciliation process. The extremists have a common purpose, to promote division, strife, and war. They must and will not be allowed to succeed.

I call on men and women of all faiths to unite in opposition to the forces of dark hatred. The people of the Middle East deserve a peaceful future. They deserve the right to pray in peace, as we join them in praying for it.

## **Exchange With Reporters Prior to Departure for Chicago, Illinois**

*February 28, 1994*

### **Bosnia**

**Q.** Can you give us any sense of what is going on in Bosnia and what has happened—

**The President.** Well, you know the essential facts, that last evening after midnight our time, United States aircraft, flying under NATO authority, warned some fixed-wing Serbian aircraft, Bosnian Serbian aircraft, to land, and when they didn't, they were shot down. There were two warnings. Every attempt was made, to the best of our information, to avoid this encounter.

We have had responsibility for enforcing the no-fly zone since last April. It has been since last fall that there were any fixed-wing aircraft that we knew of violating the no-fly zone, and we're attempting to get more facts now. We're also trying to brief everyone involved in this effort to bring peace to Bosnia about the facts, and if we find out any more

information, of course, we'll be glad to give it to you. But it seems to——

**Q.** Why now? Why now? Is this a new get-tough policy?

**The President.** No, no. The violations—the principal violations of the no-fly zone have been by helicopters, which could easily land. We've not had a fixed-wing violation reported of any kind, much less one we were in a position to do something about, to the best of my information, since last fall, since September. Those are much more serious because of the capacity they have to engage in military conduct from the air. Our mandate under the United Nations was to enforce the no-fly zone to eliminate the prospect that the war could be carried into the air.

**Q.** How were you informed, President Clinton? How did you learn of this, sir?

**The President.** Early, early this morning I was notified.

NOTE: The exchange began at 8:05 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

### Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion at Wilbur Wright College in Chicago February 28, 1994

**The President.** I'm glad to see all of you. I'm glad to also be back at Wright Community College where I first came in December of 1992, although, Congressmen and mayors, you will remember, it was in a different facility. This is much nicer and newer. It's good to be back here.

We're here to talk about two things that relate to one another, crime and health care. It's appropriate that we're having this discussion today because today the Brady bill becomes law. It requires background checks on anyone who buys a handgun or gun and will help to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and people who are mentally unfit. It will prevent now, we know based on research, thousands of handgun murders all across our country. Here in Illinois, where you already have a tough law similar to the Brady law, it will prevent people who should not have guns from buying guns in other States, using them here to commit crimes.

Before we begin, I'd like to talk with Jim Brady who made history with his heroic efforts, along with his wonderful wife, Sarah, to pass this bill. They worked for 7 long years to pass it. I want to say Congressman Rostenkowski has supported the bill all along the way, but there was surprisingly continuing opposition in Congress. It all melted away last year. I hope that our campaign and election had something to do with it. But for whatever reason, we had a good, good, strong bipartisan measure of support for the Brady bill. It's now the law as of today.

And I just wanted—I've got Jim Brady on the phone, I think. And I wanted to congratulate him and thank him for his efforts. Jim, are you on the phone?

**James Brady.** Good morning, Mr. President.

**The President.** Is Sarah there?

**Sarah Brady.** I'm right here, sir.

**The President.** Well, it's nice to hear you both.

**Mrs. Brady.** Well, it's good to hear from you.

**The President.** As you know, I'm here in Chicago with a lot of people who understand the importance of what you've done. I'm here with doctors and other health care professionals who treat gunshot victims and people who are recovering from wounds. So I'm sure they're all very grateful to you, just as I am today.

**Mrs. Brady.** Well, we thank you for your leadership and for their support. It took a real team effort to get this passed, and we thank you very much for it.

**The President.** Well, I know that you believe this is just the beginning in our fight, and I know that you've got a lot of other objectives you want to try to achieve. I want you to know that we're going to be in there pulling for you and working with you.

**Mrs. Brady.** Well, thank you. We appreciate it.

**Mr. Brady.** We can't lose then.

**The President.** You know, today, Secretary Bentsen is announcing that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms is taking an assault weapon called the "street sweeper" off the free market.

**Mr. Brady.** Yeah.